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December 20, 1994

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Commissioner Rachelle Chong
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

Dear Commissioner Chong:

We, the undersigned organizations made up of parents, teachers, psychologists, health care workers, consumer advocates, and others who care deeply about children, are writing to urge to strengthen the guidelines for the Children's Television Act.

Millions of American children grow up facing crises such as hunger, poverty, family problems and violence which leave them ill-prepared to learn in school. Millions more are educated in underfunded and troubled school systems. The number of school drop-outs and illiterate high school graduates increases dramatically each year. These trends imperil our nation's health, security and future.

Broadcast television can play an unprecedented role in nourishing the minds of our nation's children. To quote from the 1974 FCC Policy Statement, "There are many imaginative and exciting ways in which the medium can be used to further a child's understanding of a wide range of areas: history, science, literature, the environment, drama, music, fine arts, human relations, other cultures and languages, and basic skills such as reading and mathematics which are crucial to a child's development."

We know that broadcasters have the talent to create children's shows which are as educational as they are entertaining. Yet, today's children have greater access to sensationalistic talk shows, violent cartoons, and adult sitcoms than they do to programming designed to enrich their minds.

The FCC needs to strengthen the guidelines of the Children's Television Act by establishing real policies designed to safeguard the interests of our children. These should include a clearer definition of "educational" programming and a requirement that television stations air at least one hour a day of 30-minute educational shows between 7 a.m.-10 p.m. in regularly scheduled time slots.

No other regulatory body is in a position to make this happen. Please... America's children are counting on you.

Sincerely,

University College - East Region
Dept. of Social Work
P. R. Social Problems Class
P. R. Social Politics Class

(signatures over)

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The Honorable Reed Hundt
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